

# The SCOUT

**Stealthy Operations of the Baseball Wisacre, Who Weeds Out Promising Players for the Major Leagues from Forty-Eight Minor Leagues and Countless Amateur Clubs.**

BY ALLEN SANGREE.

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THE old story of Diogenes snooping around with a lantern hunting for an honest man has a near parallel in the modern baseball scout hunting for a star player. If you were a big league scout and uncovered just one man for your club the kidney of Wagner, Mathewson, Speaker or Cobb, you wouldn't need worry about your livelihood for several years. The owner might even tender you a house and lot as a bonus, where you could rest on your laurels.

When John Kling, of the Cubs, mutinied because Charley Murphy refused him a rise in salary, the Chicago magnate tramped up and down his office in an agony of despair. To his scouts and the universe in general he made the wide open offer—

"Find me another Johnny Kling and there's \$10,000 here waiting. There must be one somewhere. I've got to have him."

Hundreds of letters poured in telling of this and that phenom, who, the writer, vowed, was an incipient Kling, but the veteran scouts only grinned.

"Murphy is kidding," said they. "Why, there isn't a high school club from Portland to Portland that hasn't been frisked by all of us. Overlook a possible Kling? Holy bats! Tell it to Sweeney!"

At the present time there are two major leagues and forty-eight minor leagues working under the national agreement, and one might think it would be an easy matter out of the population in the United States, Canada, and we might include Cuba, South America and Japan, to cull enough experts to maintain baseball at its high degree of skill. Millions of boys and young men are playing every day on town lots, village greens and schoolyards, and they appear to be just as good as professionals. They can throw, catch, pitch, run and hit. They even organize team work, use hit-and-run signals, play the "squeeze" and the delayed steal. Before them is the possibility of earning two, three, four thousand dollars a year. And yet Charles F. Ebbets, after spending \$20,000 in 1910 for thirty new players, now finds his team far down in the second division.

This last is the only reply necessary to prove the usefulness of your modern baseball scout. Ebbets bought from hearsay and upon his own imperfect judgment thirty men. Detroit employed five shrewd scouts, old ball players, and Detroit did not buy a man. The Tiger management figured that it was cheaper to pay \$15,000 for scouts and their expenses than to spend \$5,000 more for useless material. The Detroit owners could not find a lad throughout this broad and that would strengthen the team, told the owners, and the result is—what? Well, regard the standing in the American League to-day.

Hence it is that competition and rivalry among these hunters of the diamond is more bitter than that among the clubs for pennant honors. The scout must not sting his employer by purchasing a "lemon," he must not overlook a budding champion, and he must make as good bargains as possible. Generally he has carte blanche to buy, draft or reject a candidate, so he entire responsibility falls upon him. His job depends upon his judgment, resources and activity. It is no back work, and while the scout is little known to the public, receives no plaudits from the multitude, yet his vocation is picturesque, interesting and remunerative.

These nimrods of the diamond work silently, quickly and fervently, beginning their peregrinations at the season's opening, and before it is over they have covered a good part of the United States and Canada. Picture to yourself the life of Arthur Irwin, famous in old days as a shortstop, manager and master of baseball tactics, now recognized as the king of baseball scouts. One afternoon he may be looking over the game from the grand stand in New York; that night he has departed, unknown to any one except his employer, Frank Farrell, for Medicine Hat, in the West Canada League; Paris, in the Blue Grass, or Terre Haute, in the Three I.

With the lightest of travelling impedimenta, you would recognize him by his stodge, though active figure, his gray mustache and shrewd, twinkling Irish eyes. Alighting from the train unostentatiously, he goes to a secluded hotel, and, if essential, he registers under an assumed name. There is a man in Billville who looks like a corner and perhaps ten or twelve other scouts are after him.

## Sources of "Tips."

It might be explained here that these big game hunters get their information frequently from touts and again from the weekly record published in the Sporting News. Touting is done by travelling salesmen, for your American drummer is generally an ardent fan; actors, old ball players and personal friends of the candidate. As a rule they are not to be relied upon, but, on the other hand, the tip may result in digging up a live one. For that matter, the records are no certain guides either. And yet if John Jones steals an average of a base a day and hits .350 in the

Spectators are with him and howl their heads off for Joe to "clean up." When he does crack out a two bagger they leer at the famous scout as though to say—"If New York doesn't take Joe now this Irwin must be a bonehead."

The owner waxes more and more enthusiastic as he talks prices and Irwin haggles with him, debating seriously whether \$3,000 is not exorbitant. Looks as though he was deeply impressed, but as a matter of fact he has passed up Joe Smithers in the fourth inning, after seeing him make the following play:—

The score was 4 to 2 in favor of Billville, one man out, a very fast and daring runner on second, a slow man at bat. A long hit was made in right centre, good for two bags to a speedy sprinter. Smithers, in right field, got his hands on it and, thinking only of making a grand stand play, whiffed the horsehide home, although the fast man was then within twenty feet of the plate. There was not one chance in a thousand of getting him, but it would have been easy to nail the slow man lumbering toward second and thus have two out. The result was that the ball bounded past

That night Irwin strolled around town with the owner, still discussing a price for Smithers.

"I'd have to talk with Mr. Farrell," he said, "before giving an answer. We're pretty well stocked with outfielders. By the way, d'you want to sell that first baseman?"

"Why, sure, I'd let him go. But, heavens, man, he has a weak arm and only hits 250. Smithers led the league two years."

"Well, I'll take a flyer on the other fellow; we're shy of infielders."

The owner named a moderate price, and in five minutes the Yanks had procured Earl Gardner, second baseman extraordinary, who is so quick of thought that even the eccentric and brilliant Chase seldom catches him napping in an unexpected play. Smithers, whose right name it would be unkind to mention, got in fast company and fell by the wayside after one season.

## McGraw's Quick Judgment.

Negative illustrations tell the story of selecting players. A shortstop on a Pennsylvania minor league

baseman's hands and they made a double play on you."

"Hully chee!" snorted the bushy. "If I could do that I'd have been in the big leagues long ago. No sir; I'm a natural right field hitter and nothing else."

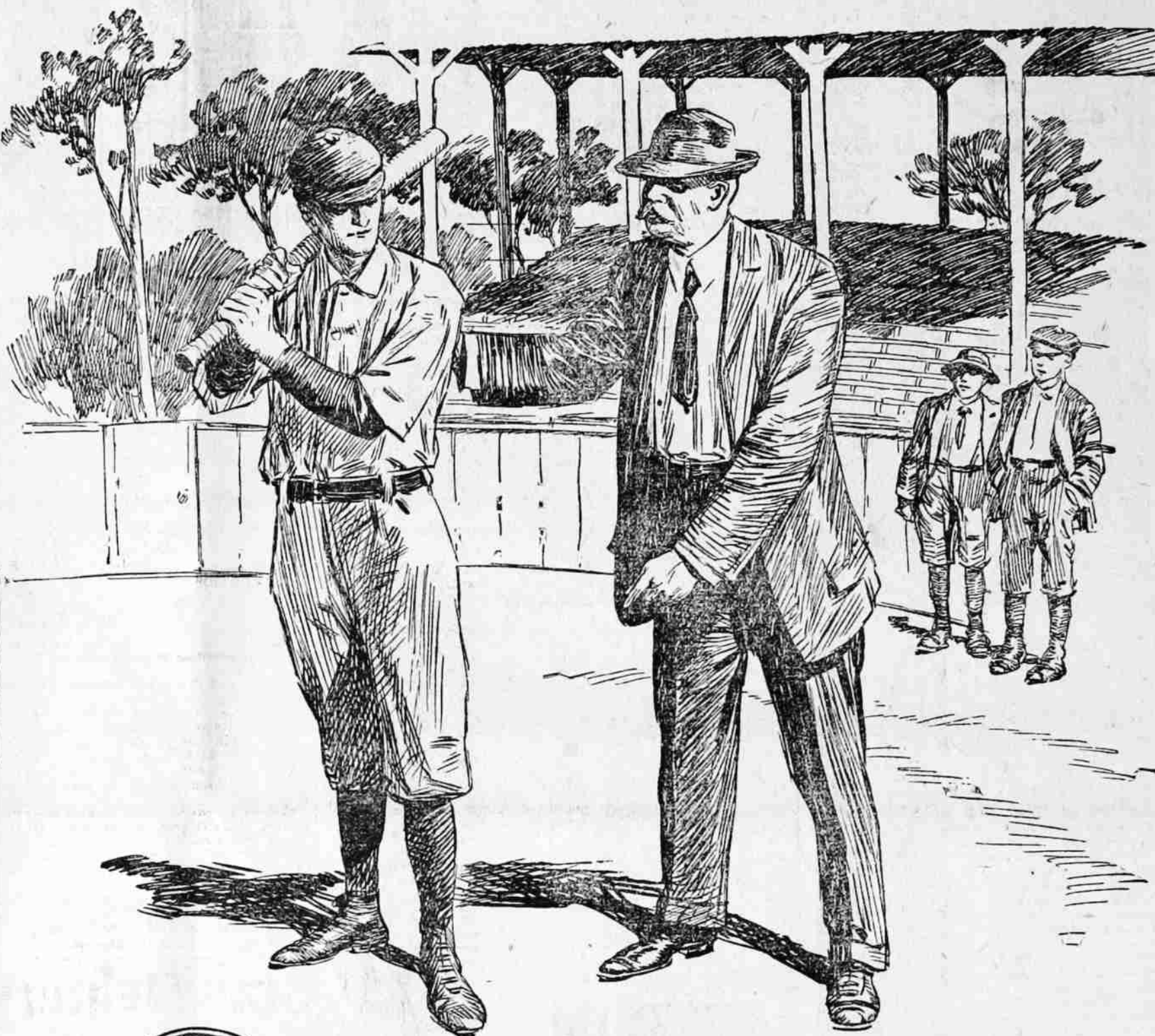
"Good night for you," said Irwin to himself.

When he put the same proposition to Daniels, the collegian expressed eagerness for instruction. Next morning the scout took him and a pitcher on the day before morning practice, and in one hour Daniels had shifted his batting position, had learned the trick of bunting and pulling the ball, in which features of the game he is constantly improving. The other lad had good in fast company, too, but only for a month. By that time every opponent spotted his weakness and he gradually drifted from the "biz show."

Let he overlook a good man the zealous scout will run down tips that frequently are jokes. Billy Gilbert, when hunting for St. Louis, received about twenty letters boasting a wonder in Northern Iowa. Arriving there after a game was on, he asked the owner which man it was. Owner pointed with



ARTHUR IRWIN  
THE MASTER SCOUT  
Photo by Spooner & Wells.



In One Hour Daniels Had Shifted His Batting Position



"BILLY" GILBERT.

Texas League he is worth looking up. The scout wants to discover if the lad is brainy and capable of learning.

Irwin denies that he ever disguises himself with whiskers and blue goggles, but he certainly arrives with no brass band. Being so well known, it is difficult for him to escape recognition, so word quickly passes over the Billville grand stand.—

"There's a scout from New York here—Arthur Irwin. Bet he's after Joe Smithers."

The club owner quickly bears it and almost, fawningly approaches the celebrity, for minor league magnates figure on making a considerable quota of their profits on these sales. Occasionally an owner is in such prime luck as to dispose of his whole team; and you may be sure that all do not make good in the "big show." Some scouts have been overreached in their eagerness to secure talent.

"Well," says the Billville magnate, "you came just in time, Mr. Irwin. We had Bobby Lowe, from Detroit, here last week looking at Smithers, and Billy Murray, of Pittsburg, is on the way, but I'd rather see him go to New York. He's a marvel, Arthur; a second Ty Cobb."

Meantime news has reached the players' bench and Smithers has visions of smashing a home run and winning the pennant for the greatest city in America.

## PEMAQUID.

[Note.—The Improvement Association of Pemaquid, Maine, is moving to the preservation and memorialization of the historic rock on which it is practically founded.]

ABOVE the Rock of Pemaquid  
There stands Port William Henry,  
Once San Juan d'Ulton of the North,  
Now very largely memory.  
This rhyme is rotten, but, of course,  
A poet may be shrewd.  
For many sins, and have a Pemaquid  
Aquidly forgiven.  
But to resume about the Rock  
That tells us the story  
Of British, French and savages  
Who made it red and gory—  
There Captain Smith and d'Arville  
And redskin nameless killers  
Did all they could in furnishing  
The pioneer grave fillers.  
Upon the Rock of Pemaquid,  
Cleaned by the sea's ablutions,  
Were founded, so the neighbors say,  
Our noblest institutions  
That stand for freedom and the things  
Which make our growing nation,  
Beyond the shadow of a doubt,  
The greatest in creation.  
To-day the soul of Pemaquid  
Is stirred to brave endeavor  
To make the Rock of Pemaquid  
A monument forever.  
And North and South and East and West  
Hand out their approbation  
Of patriotic Pemaquid's  
Improvement Association.

W. J. LAMPTON.

club was touted so highly that McGraw sent a scout, and when he reported favorably the Giants' manager himself travelled out to see the phenom. One look was enough—the lad kept his heels together in making a pick up, his toes forming an angle.

"That'll be all for him," snapped McGraw, and jumped the next train back to Gotham.

When Arthur Irwin was investigating Bert Daniels, now a crack gardener on the Yankees, he was tipped to another man in the same league, who, according to records, was the equal of Daniels. We shall call him Jones. Irwin noticed that in a critical part of the game when this fellow came to bat the enemy's infield and outfield moved far toward right, leaving a big gap between short and third.

"Why didn't you pull the ball over in left?" asked Irwin that evening. "You hit right into the second

## SUPPOSING.

LET me suppose, dear Phyllis, I am much in love with you;  
There surely isn't harm in just supposing it!  
And that my love for ages has been constant, firm and true.

Though diffidence has kept me from disclosing it;  
Suppose this love that I suppose quite filled me with alarm.  
Suppose it burned through years in fiery fashion;  
Suppose words can't express its might; suppose some subtle charm  
Drew from your heart a twin to its own passion;  
I don't suppose you could suppose your dignity would yield  
To make confession to a bashful stupid;  
Suppose that we suppose the lips of your heart were unsealed;  
Would they bespeak the presence of Rogue Cupid?

And now suppose that we suppose we don't suppose this time;  
Suppose we live the real, without supposing;  
Suppose you let me hold your hand—why, girl, is that a crime?—  
And let me tell of Cupid unrepenting;  
Suppose I ask if I may kiss your peach and creamy cheek,  
Or, growing bolder, seek your lips' sweet pressure,  
I wonder if you'd understand or if I'd better speak  
In common prose or bad poetic measure?  
Suppose, now that I've had my kiss, you tell me what you think;  
Am I to go my way still unrepenting?  
Ah, Phyllis, dear, if I'm not blind I saw your eyelid wink—  
And I suppose that means responsive voicing.  
JEROME G. CLARK.

pride to the pitcher, who was seven feet tall and so cross eyed that, as Gilbert said, "if he cried the tears would run down the back of his neck." His only virtue was that you couldn't tell whether he was going to throw to first or to the plate. He had batters swinging when the ball was in the first baseman's hands. But he hadn't enough speed to break a pane of glass. Gilbert nearly fell off the grand stand laughing and then became peeved at having taken such a long trip for nothing.

"Why, he'll make a hit in St. Louis," protested the magnate.

"He sure will," called Gilbert, as he jumped for the station. "When Bresnahan throws him out of the park you can hear him fall down there on Main street."

A scout is supposed not only to judge talent, but to save the club money. Witness this. Several years ago Cleveland gave \$12,500 for Cy Young, and in addition two players, Chech and Ryan, valued at \$3,000 each, making a total \$18,500. Irwin, on the other hand, bought three star pitchers, Quinn, Ford and Vaughn, for a total of \$1,750. Then he sold Conroy, Moriarty and Eiberfeld for about \$15,000 in all and bought Bert Daniels for how much do you suppose? Why, a measly \$250. Wilson, a pitcher, turned back, and Gardner, present second baseman for Frank Farrell's club, stood the magnate only \$750.

Irwin is no Shylock and will bid high if he thinks the man is worth it and there is competition. Ray Fisher, the Vermont College boy, won twenty-seven games out of thirty-two for Hartford and Irwin got after him hot foot. Hooked up with Wanner the phenom cost \$4,000. Day after the agreement was made John I. Taylor offered \$6,000 for Fisher alone and the owner tried his best to wiggle out, offering Farrell \$2,000 cash to let go of Fisher, all in vain.

Ball players being in such demand, minor league magnates naturally use every strategy to fool the scout. A marked instance of this was the sale of "Rube" Beaton, left hand pitcher, of Macon, who was so widely touted that on the day for bidding ten scouts appeared. Benton so impressed Garry Herrmann, of Cincinnati, that he authorized his Nimrod, "Bid" McPhee, to pay \$500 more than any other club, no matter what the offer. When the price got up to \$3,000 Irwin dropped out, and gradually the others succumbed until the mark stood at \$6,500. At this point a man rushed in, dishevelled as though from a long journey. "I represent a National League club," he exclaimed, "and I bid \$7,000." He evaded the question as to what club, but in some way it was understood that Barney Dreyfus had sent him. McPhee went him \$500 better and got the man. Afterward it transpired that the stranger was a banker, of Savannah, and the notion prevailed that he was employed as a capter. Benton was unfortunate in falling ill and never made.